

In Memoriam

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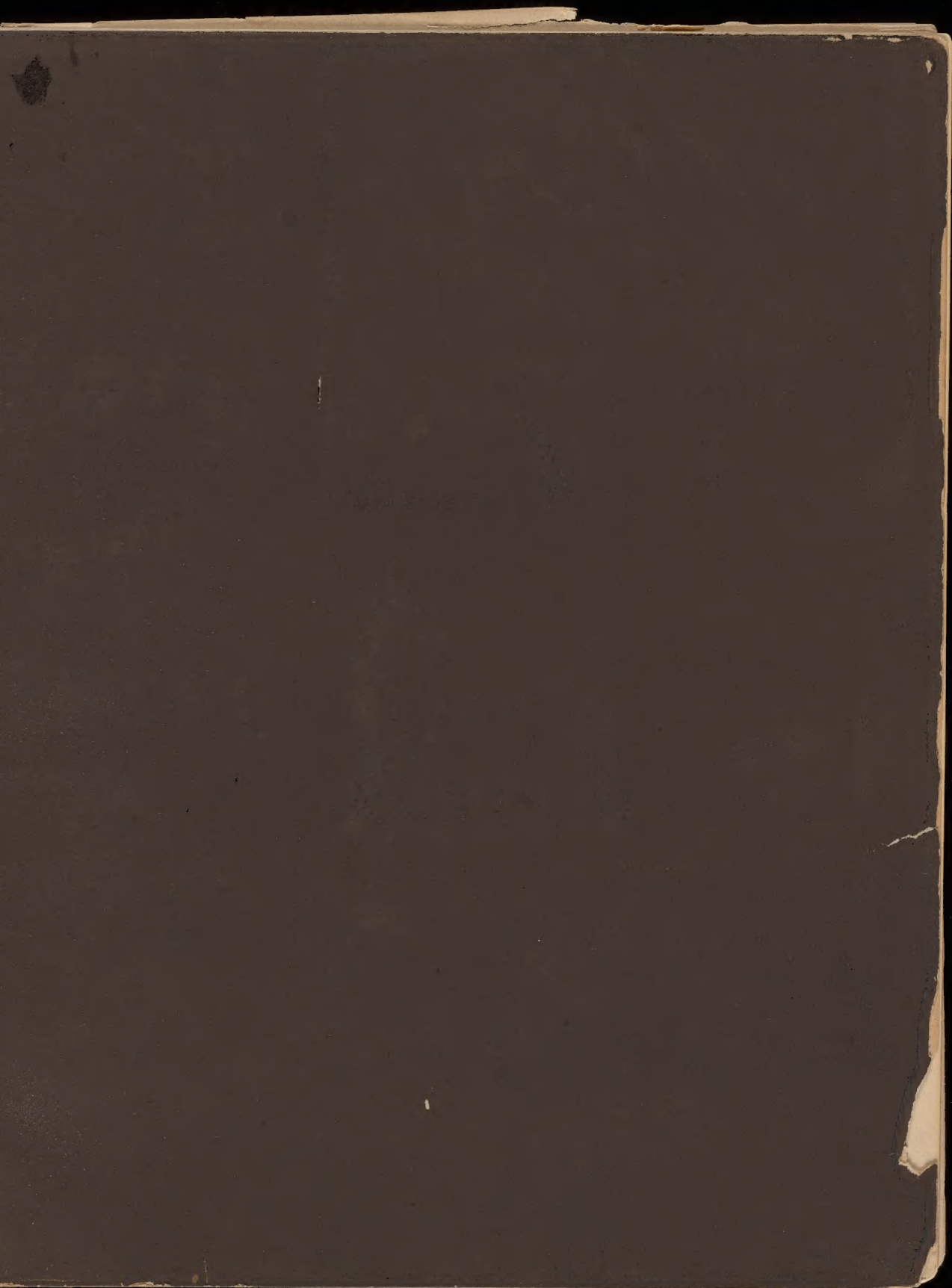
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Rev. B. F. de Costa

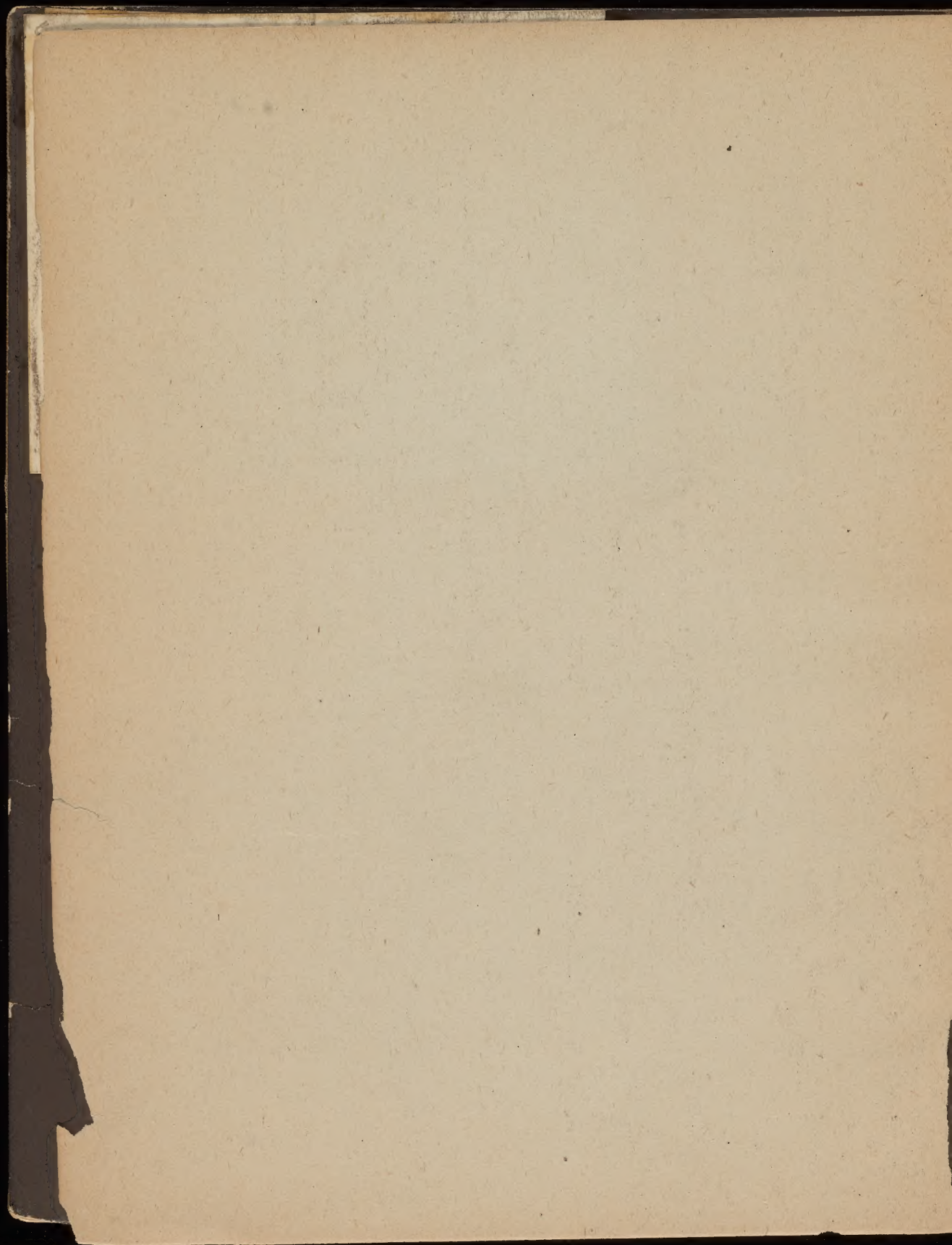
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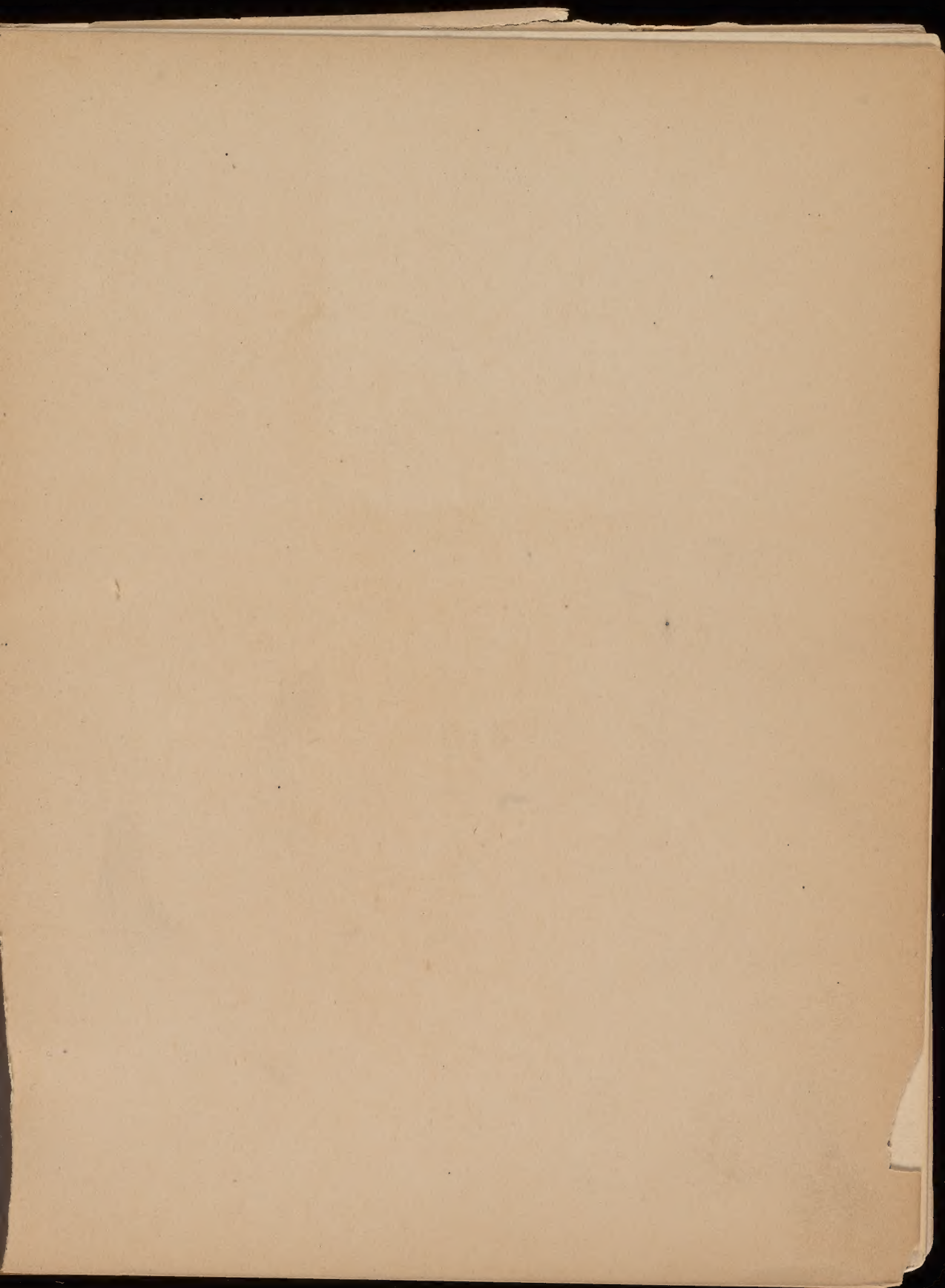
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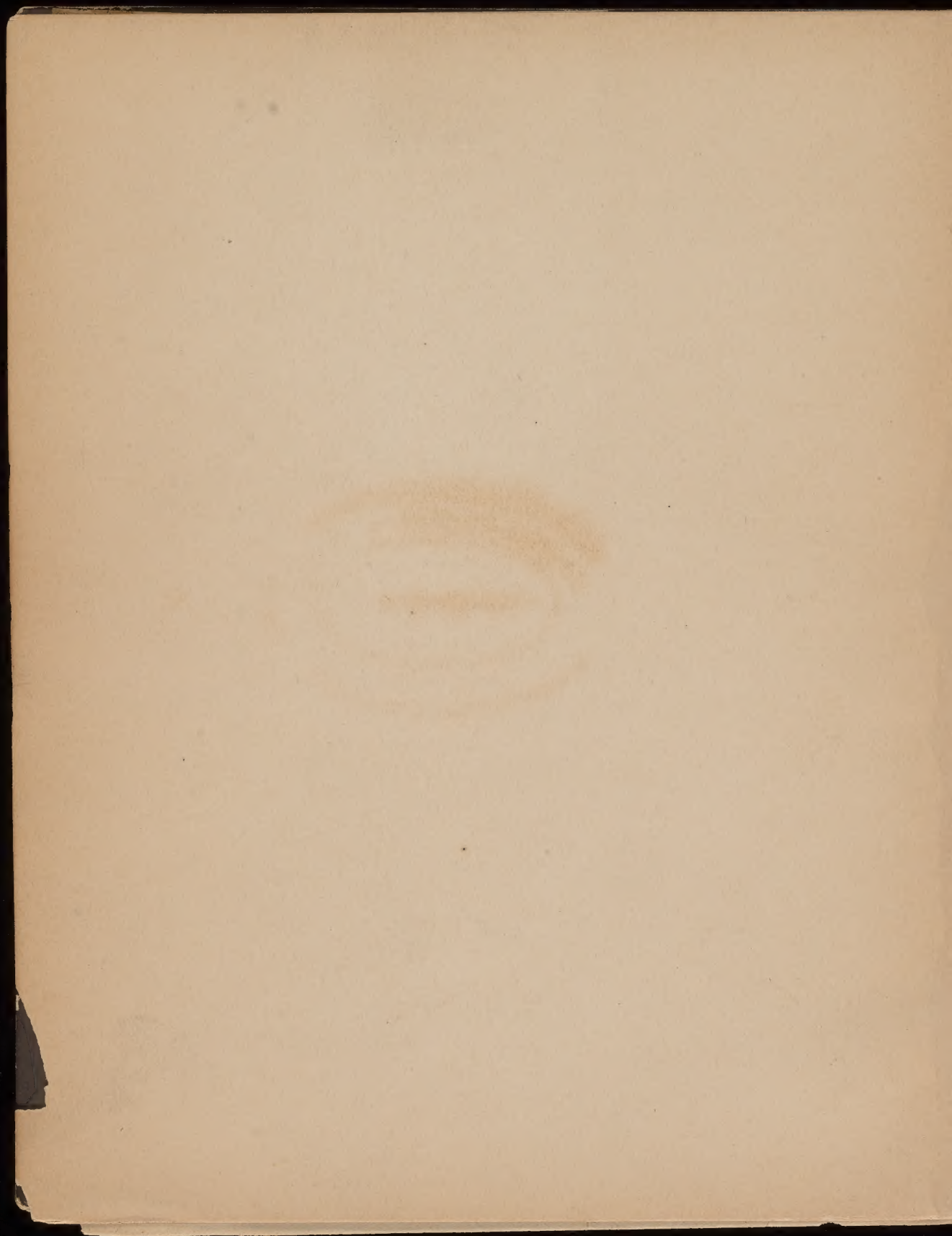
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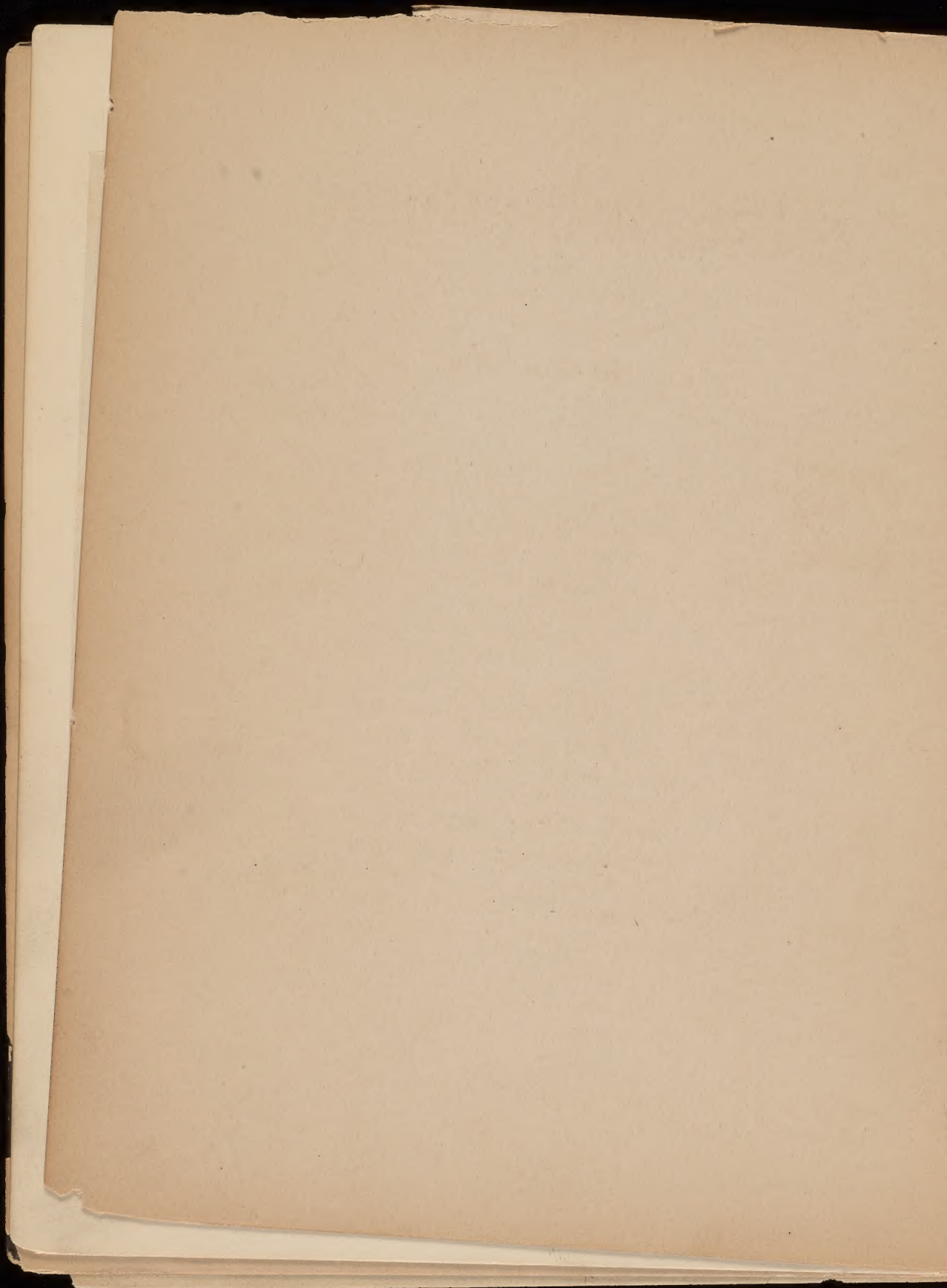
IN MEMORIAM:

William Sickling De Costa.

PRIVATELY PRINTED.

Charlestown :

1878.





In Memoriam.

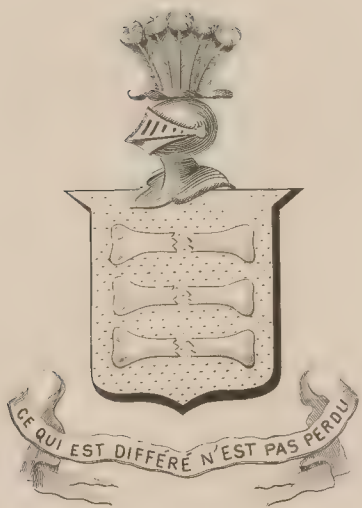


WILLIAM HICKLING DE COSTA, Son of Ezekiel Carver and Elizabeth DeCosta, was born in Charlestown, Massachusetts, October 15th, 1825, and died at Medford, July 1st, 1878. On one side, his remote ancestors were the Portuguese DaCostas, some of whom were navigators on the Atlantic before Columbus, and prominently connected with the Portuguese insular possessions. A tradition has been handed down, to the effect that an ancestor of one of the female branches of the family was in the ship of Columbus on his first voyage. Representatives of the family passed into France, and settled at Rouen, where they became not only French but Huguenots, and warm advocates of the Protestant Faith. Upon the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, they fled, passing into England and thence to America, Isaac DeCosta settling at Boston in 1699, and marrying Mary Temple. At the Revolution, part of the family sided with the King, and took their way to Annapolis, Nova Scotia. In New York, another sympathiser with the Royal cause sold tea to Mangle Minthorne, contrary to law, Mr. Minthorne being dealt with, but escaping with a somewhat humble apology.

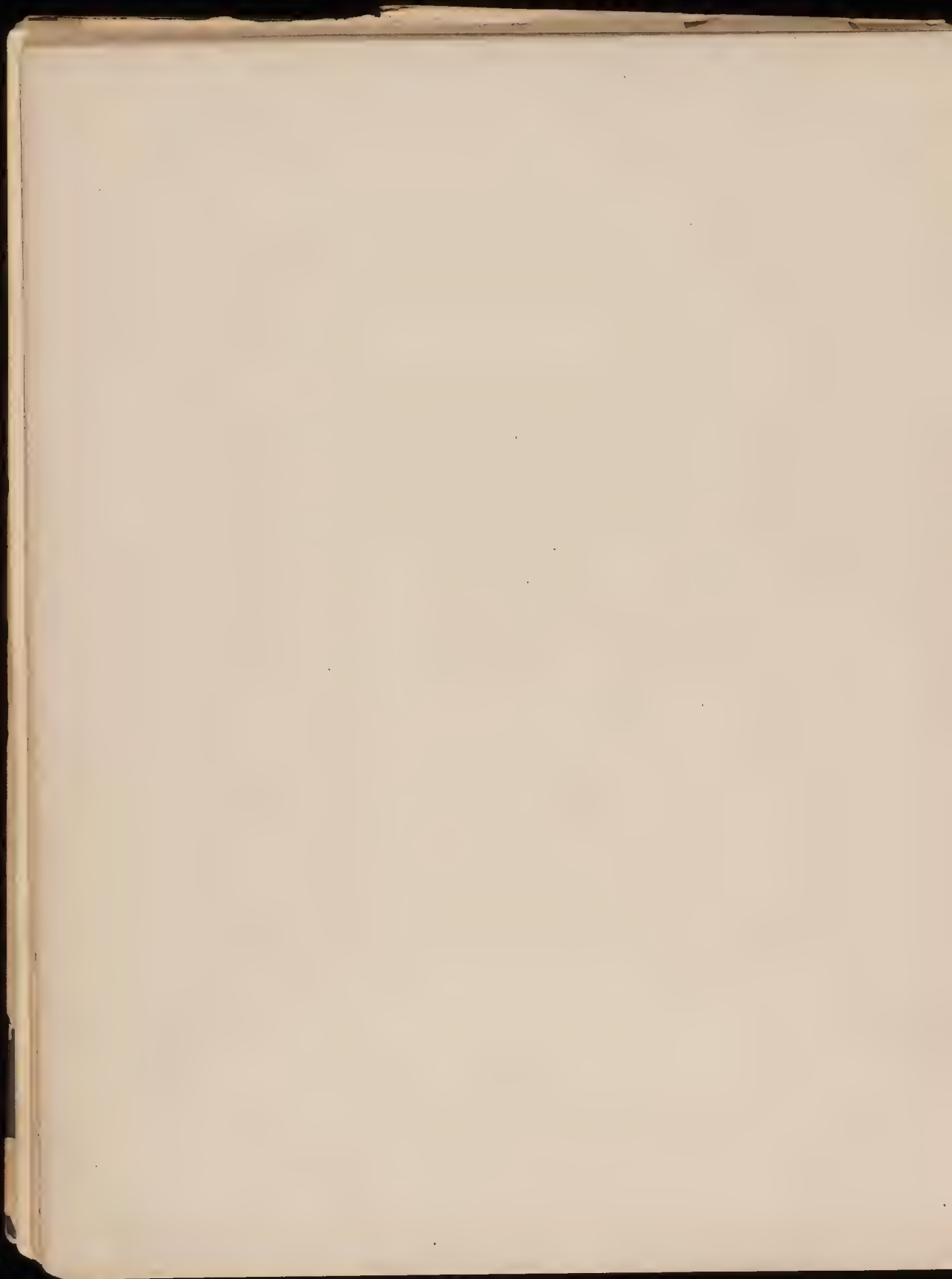
On the Hickling side, the deceased was English, and of the same stock as William Hickling Prescott, the Historian. In England the Hicklings are traced for three hundred years. The Puritan element entered the English line through Robert Carver, of Marshfield, who came over in 1638. The Roman Catholic element was revived by Mr. DeCosta's Aunt, Mary Rebecca Theresa DeCosta, known in Religion as Sister Ste. Claire. This person was the first Novice received into the community of Boston Ursulines, and was a member of the Order at Mount Benedict at the time the Convent was destroyed by an ignorant mob.

Mr. DeCosta passed from the schools of his native city, to enter upon fresh training in connection with that school which has formed so many men for usefulness, the Press. For a series of years he studied the profession of Journalism in connection with the "Old Colony Memorial," at Plymouth. Eventually, however, being allured by the hope of fortune, he embarked upon the tide of emigration that set out towards California in 1849, thus being amongst the early pioneers who laid the foundations of modern society within the Golden Gates. He reached San Francisco by sailing around Cape Horn in the "Duxbury," delaying at points of interest like Rio Janeiro and Juan Fernandez, and passing along the Coast of Peru, which his father visited in 1820. The voyage occupied about six months, the tedium being relieved by editing a pen-and-ink newspaper that appeared from week to week, to which he contributed sprightly articles in prose and verse. One number was brought out at Juan Fernandez.

Upon reaching San Francisco, the ship, owned by a company of Associates, of whom he made one, was abandoned and left to decay,



De Costa.



the most of the adventurers resorting at once to the mines. Mr. DeCosta divided his time between Mining and Journalism, at one period having charge of a department of a daily paper on which Bayard Taylor was a reporter, Dr. Ewer, now a clergyman of New York, being one of the editors.

In California he was joined by his life-long friend, Daniel Williams, early associated with him at Plymouth, who followed him around Cape Horn and shared his experience in *El Dorado*. With improved fortunes, they finally set out for home, by the way of Panama. At Jamacia, Mr. DeCosta was left behind, and Mr. Williams came on alone. The next steamer, however, reunited the two friends in Charlestown.

Having now, in some measure, satisfied the love of adventure, they formed a legal copartnership and established the *Charlestown Advertiser*. Eventually Mr. Williams studied Law, and was admitted to the Bar of Massachusetts, while his old friend continued to edit the *Advertiser* for about twenty-five years; though not without the frequent and valued aid of Mr. Williams, who still continues to employ his graceful and facile pen in connection with the public press. In 1852 he married Ann Augusta Dennen, having one son and two daughters.

Mr. DeCosta was appointed Postmaster of Charlestown by President Lincoln, which office he filled for eight years, to the great satisfaction of his fellow-citizens, and the Department. Mr. DeCosta had comparatively a few intimate friends, although he enjoyed an extensive acquaintance, but his strong friendship began with early life and continued unbroken to the end. In his career of journalism, he encountered those feelings of partisan prejudice which are likely to arise

between men in heated political times, but these passed away with the occasions that engendered them. To indicate how superficial after all are the variances which spring up amongst public men, it may be mentioned here that the flowers placed upon the coffin of the deceased were brought by the representative of the rival local press, also identified with the opposition in national politics.

Many who were repelled and prejudiced by the surface of reserve, which was one of his strong peculiarities, in time found their way beneath it, and learned to know and respect the deep, honorable and sterling qualities of his character, and wondered that they should have been hidden from them for any time.

During the last years of Mr. DeCosta's life, financial troubles came thickly upon him, as upon thousands of others, and his closing days were overshadowed by that solicitude which, under similar circumstances, every thoughtful head of a family must feel; yet there remained to him a source of tender consolation in the deep and strong affections which clustered around him and clung to him to the last, even rebelling at the thought of separation. He was a loving son, and one over whom bent a mother of more than four-score years, who had lingered in the expectation of seeing him spared to smooth her own path to the grave. He was a tender and affectionate husband and father, and a warm, true and unswerving friend.

There are many, outside of his own immediate relatives, missing him from the daily walks of busy life, who will sympathize with them in their bereavement, and echo the tender words of another:

"Oh! for the sound of a voice that is hushed,
And the touch of a vanished hand."

Mr. DeCosta was a man of singular industry, uncommon perseverance and great decision. In conducting the press, he never took counsel of fear.

It sometimes occurs that, after a wasting sickness, followed by death, the character of the individual takes full possession of the features, which then epitomize the life. Such was the case with him of whom we write. As he lay in the coffin, awaiting the last rites, quiet and peaceful as though reposing in sleep, and with those hands, so accustomed to the sacrament of Toil, forever at rest, the soul seemed to have returned, lighting up his countenance with the most remarkable expression, and bringing out the whole character of the man.

The temperament of Mr. DeCosta was eminently cheerful, his manners simple and unostentatious. He was quick to expose and denounce public wrongs, and firm in his support of Republican institutions. Remarkably fond of Nature, his favorite recreations were found in connection with his rod and gun. The Angler's Club was one of the few Associations with which, technically, he was connected. In the old forests around Plymouth, in the pathless wilds of the Adirondacks, or upon the Ocean, he was always at home. In the weekly rambles, which he was accustomed to take with his family in the Medford woods, he felt a certain nearness to Nature's heart, observing all her moods and being sensible to her admonitions.

After just six months of severe and unremitted suffering, endured with gentle patience and fortitude, and marked by the most delicate thoughtfulness and consideration for those who found it a privilege to minister to him in his last hours, he passed away. Notwithstanding the many warnings, the end was sudden, and, at the moment,

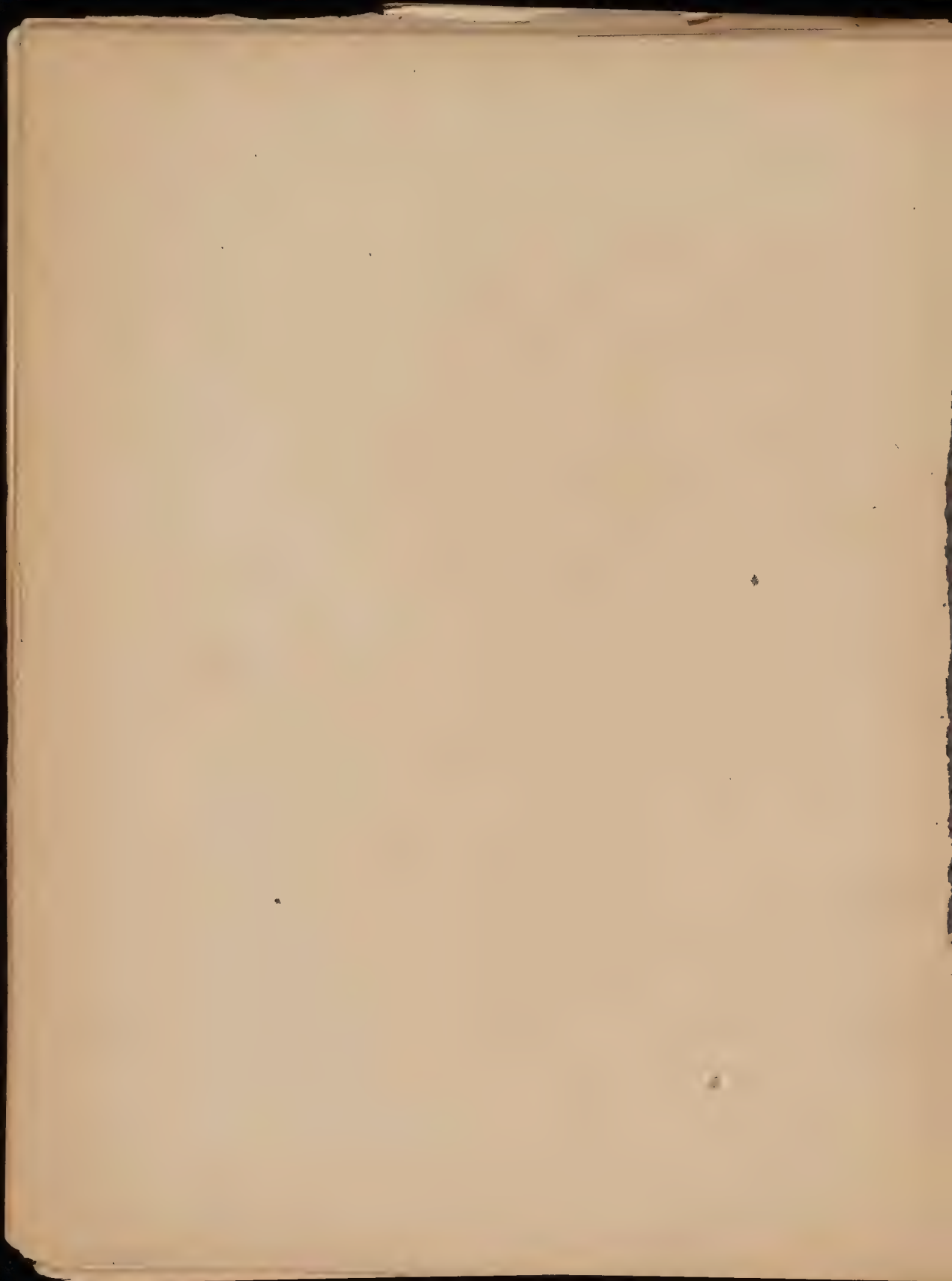
unexpected. At the evening hour, Death suddenly stole in, and without a struggle, his calm, courageous spirit was borne away.

The funeral service, according to the Ritual of the Protestant Episcopal Church, was said at the family residence in Medford, by his old friend and Pastor the Rev. Thomas R. Lambert, S. T. D., Rector of St. John's Church, Charlestown; assisted by the Rev. Julius H. Ward, acting for the Rector of Grace Church, Medford, who was absent in Europe.

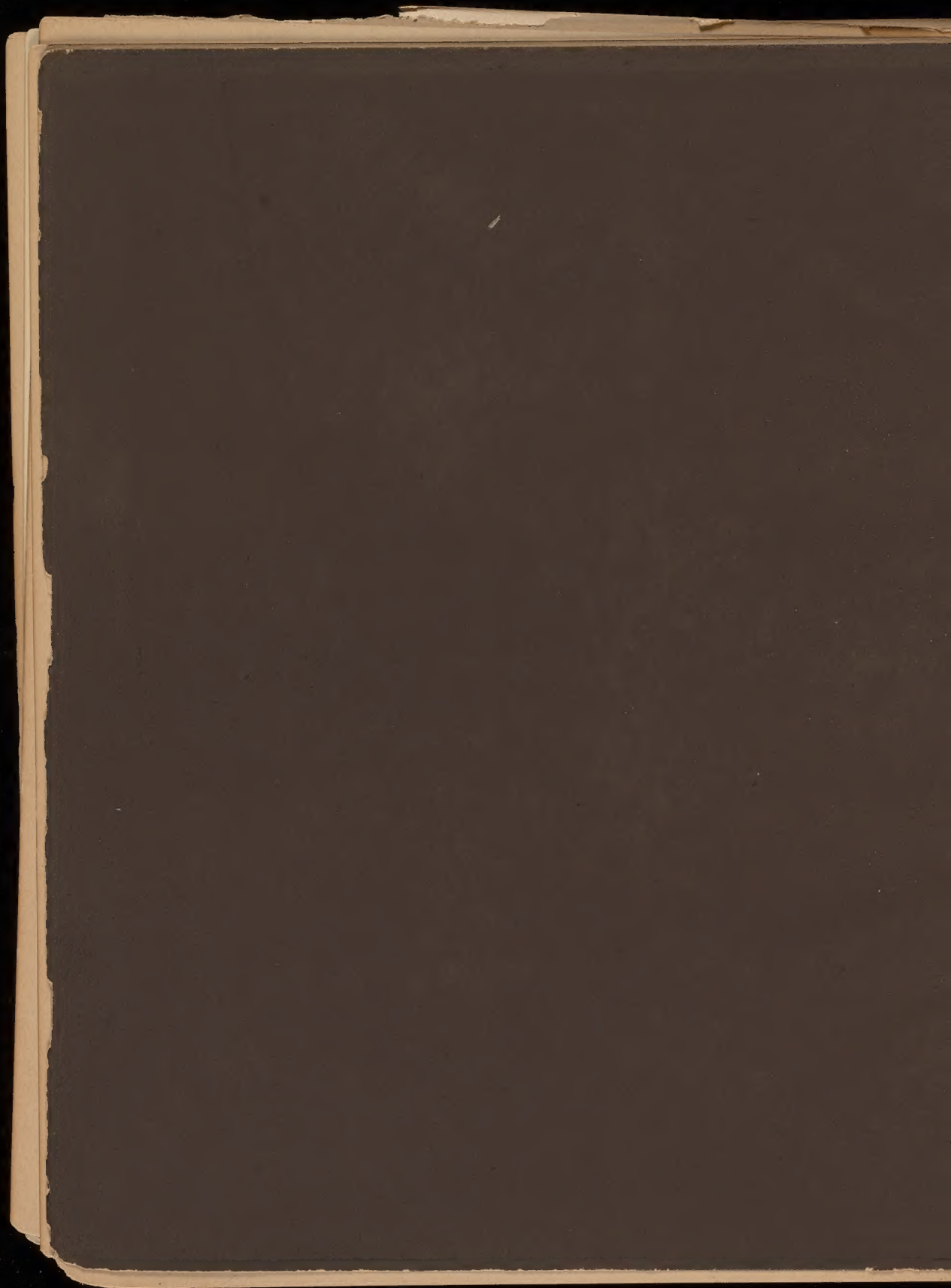
The family and numerous friends followed the remains to Mount Auburn, where the representatives of the Charlestown Lodge of Odd Fellows rendered the simple and beautiful service customary at the grave of members of the Brotherhood.

Some things that the subject of this brief Memoir toiled for were not gained, yet a great truth underlies the family Motto:

"THAT WHICH IS DEFERRED IS NOT LOST."



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